Title: Need to declare the minimum support price of coconut and rubber taking into account the cost of production.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPUZHA): I have given a notice on an issue pertaining to the agricultural producers in Kerala.

Sir, the price of coconut came down steeply, and the Government was pleased to declare a price which is far below the price that is available now. It is not based on the realities or on the cost of production. In the case of rubber also, it is said that the bench-mark price would be declared. I wish to point out that it should not be the bench-mark price but the minimum support price which has to be declared. The Government of India is under a wrong impression that it is the bench-mark price which has to be declared. If it is a bench-mark price, then there is a difficulty. If it goes above the bench-mark price, then they would release whatever has been procured and that would be against the interests of farmers. My submission is that it should not be the bench-mark price which should be declared but the minimum support price which should be declared taking into account the real cost.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What do you want the Government to do?

In reply to a question in Parliament, the hon. Minister said that the cost of production was respectively Rs.31.8 and Rs.34.5. So, if that is taken into account, any price below Rs.40 may not be declared and it cannot be like coconut where the price has been declared much below the prevailing price.

">SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN :I strongly associate myself with the sentiments expressed by Shri P. C. Thomas on this particular issue. A number of farmers belonging to Karshaka Congress have come to Delhi and they are demonstrating outside Parliament about this particular issue. This is a very serious matter and the hon. Minister of Agriculture must come forward and he should definitely respond to the demands made by the farmers. This is my demand.